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IN THE CLAIMS

Amended claims follow. Insertions are underlined, while deletions are struck out. The status of each claim is included prior to each heading.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for testing scanner updates executing on a computer including computer readable medium, comprising:
 - (a) distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of computers utilizing a network;
 - (b) distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers utilizing the network;
 - (c) executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for security scanning;
 - (d) executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for testing purposes; and
 - (e) transmitting results of the testing from the computers to the server utilizing the network.
2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the full-release scanner update and the pre-release scanner update are distributed simultaneously.
3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the full-release scanner update and the pre-release scanner update are distributed together.
4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is distributed on a periodic basis.
5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is distributed with virus signatures.
6. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising automatically determining whether a pre-release scanner update exists, and

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conditionally distributing the pre-release scanner update from the server if the pre-release scanner update exists.

7. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is executed when the computers are idle.
8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the pre-release scanner update is executed automatically when the computers are idle.
9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the results are transmitted to a quality assurance administrator.
10. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising comparing results of the execution of the full-release scanner update and the pre-release scanner update.
11. (Original) The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the comparison occurs on the computers.
12. (Original) The method as recited in claim 11, and further comprising transmitting results of the comparison from the computers to the server utilizing the network.
13. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the network includes the Internet.
14. (Original) The method as recited in claim 10, and further comprising determining whether a virus is detected by the execution of the pre-release scanner update and not the full-release scanner update based on the comparison.
15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, and further comprising removing the virus.

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16. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, and further comprising storing a record of the virus.
17. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, and further comprising reporting the virus.
18. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising detecting faults associated with the execution of the pre-release scanner update.
19. (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, and further comprising transmitting a record of the faults from the computers to the server utilizing the network.
20. (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, and further comprising ceasing the execution of the pre-release scanner update on the computers in response to the detection of the faults.
21. (Original) The method as recited in claim 20, and further comprising re-executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers after ceasing the execution.
22. (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, and further comprising counting a number of the faults, and conditionally terminating the pre-release scanner update on the computers based on the number.
23. (Original) The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the faults include at least one of delays, failures, crashes, and false alarms.
24. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising detecting a duration of the execution of the pre-release scanner update.

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25. (Original) The method as recited in claim 24, and further comprising transmitting a record of the duration from the computers to the server utilizing the network.
26. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, and further comprising utilizing the results to modify the pre-release scanner update before releasing the pre-release scanner update as a full-release scanner update.
27. (Currently Amended) A computer program product for testing scanner updates executing on a computer including computer readable medium, comprising:
 - (a) computer code for distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of computers utilizing a network;
 - (b) computer code for distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers utilizing the network;
 - (c) computer code for executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for security scanning;
 - (d) computer code for executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for testing purposes; and
 - (e) computer code for transmitting results of the testing from the computers to the server utilizing the network.
28. (Currently Amended) A system for testing scanner updates executing on a computer including computer readable medium, comprising:
 - (a) logic for distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of computers utilizing a network;
 - (b) logic for distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers utilizing the network;
 - (c) logic for executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for security scanning;
 - (d) logic for executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for testing purposes; and
 - (e) logic for transmitting results of the testing from the computers to the server utilizing the network.

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29. (Currently Amended) A server-based method for testing scanner updates executing on a computer including computer readable medium, comprising:

- (a) distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of computers utilizing a network;
- (b) distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers utilizing the network;
- (c) receiving results of the execution of the full-release scanner update and the pre-release scanner update from the computers;
- (d) modifying the pre-release scanner update before releasing the pre-release scanner update as a full-release scanner update based on the results.

30. (Currently Amended) A client-based method for testing scanner updates executing on a computer including computer readable medium, comprising:

- (a) receiving from a server a full-release scanner update at a computer utilizing a network;
- (b) receiving from the server a pre-release scanner update at the computer utilizing the network;
- (c) executing the full-release scanner update on the computer for security scanning;
- (d) executing the pre-release scanner update on the computer for testing purposes; and
- (e) transmitting results of the testing from the computer to the server utilizing the network.

31. (Currently Amended) A method for testing scanner updates executing on a computer including computer readable medium, comprising:

- (a) distributing a full-release scanner update from a server to a plurality of computers utilizing a network;
- (b) distributing a pre-release scanner update from the server to the computers simultaneously with the full-release update utilizing the network;
- (c) executing the full-release scanner update on the computers for security scanning;

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- (d) determining whether the computers are idle;
- (e) automatically executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers for testing purposes upon the computers being determined to be idle;
- (f) comparing results of the execution of the full-release scanner update and the pre-release scanner update;
- (g) determining whether a virus is detected by the execution of the pre-release scanner update and not by the full-release scanner update based on the comparison;
- (h) storing a record of the detected virus;
- (i) removing the detected virus;
- (j) detecting faults associated with the execution of the pre-release scanner update;
- (k) ceasing the execution of the pre-release scanner update on the computers in response to the detection of at least one fault;
- (l) re-executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers after ceasing the execution;
- (m) counting a number of the faults;
- (n) conditionally re-executing the pre-release scanner update on the computers if the number exceeds a predetermined number within a predetermined amount of time;
- (o) storing a record of the faults;
- (p) transmitting results relating to the viruses and faults from the computers to the server utilizing the network; and
- (q) modifying the pre-release scanner update at the server before releasing the pre-release scanner update as a full-release scanner update based on the results.